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Dredging to begin in Saginaw River

Shipping industry pleased to see project starting

 [By Terry Camp](#)

SAGINAW COUNTY (WJRT) - (06/13/06) --It was two months ago when Saginaw River dock owners asked the federal government to dredge a portion of the river.

Large vessels were getting stuck in the turning basin, and the owners worried they would go out of business. Two months later, the dredging will begin.

It is welcome news to the Saginaw area shipping industry. An agreement has been reached to dredge the Sixth Street turning basin of the Saginaw River.



"We think the work will start next week and we are hoping a contractor will be there by Monday," said Wayne Schloop of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

It was two months ago when Schloop met with frustrated dock owners.

Large vessels were getting stuck and damaged in the turning basin because of built-up sediment, and no products were coming in.

Soon they would go out of business. But even with an emergency situation declared, working out an agreement to do the dredging took time.

"It was pretty complicated and complex," Schloop said.

For the last two months, dock and shipping companies improvised to get vessels down the river by not using the Sixth Street turning basin.

"We are having to back them down with a tug assist to the airport turning basin at the James Clement turning basin," said John Glynn of Wirt Stone Dock.

Glynn says even with that change, his company is only seeing one vessel a week, and that is with a lightened load. During a typical shipping season, three to four would make it to the dock each week.

"We're moving material just as fast as we are bringing it in," Glynn said. "We really could get some more vessels in here. It would help out a lot."

The more than 100,000 cubic yards of dredged material will be taken to Gull Island at the mouth of the Saginaw River while work continues on a new dredged material site in Zilwaukee Township.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says the project that will start next week will be the first dredging of the upper Saginaw River since 1995.

Great Lakes Dock and Materials out of Muskegon will do the dredging project.

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